



Team selection and coaching policy

Selection of teams at the beginning of each season

The Owls Committee (committee), led by the President, Secretary, and Registrar, in consultation with the Development Officer if required, will review the numbers in each age group and determine if players need to be moved between age groups or if players need to have exemptions requested¹.

When making these decisions, the relevant age group coaches and potentially the coaches from the previous year may be consulted, along with the parents of the respective child, as this may impact their ability to get to trainings and games.

Where numbers are low in any age group, the President will contact other local clubs to confirm if they have low or excess numbers where the two (or more) clubs could combine teams.

Considerations when finalising placement of players within age groups will be -

1. **Number required across all relevant age groups** - can age groups be combined or individual players moved without disrupting teams?
2. **Player's age** - are they registered in the correct age group? Has a parent accidentally registered them in the wrong age group?
3. **Player's ability / size** - could the player play up/down an age group?
4. **Players friendship group** – the committee acknowledges the importance of players remaining in their friendship groups

When there are sufficient numbers of players for two or more teams -

- players in graded age groups (under 10 and up) will be selected for teams based on their playing ability, unless
 - a specific request has been submitted by an individual to play with a team *or* an entire team requests to play together. The individual or team will be entered into the appropriate division, according to the playing ability of other team/s in the same age group within the club.
- the selection process will be undertaken by all coaches in the respective age group. This decision must be finalised well before the first game of the season.
- selection for teams must be based on ability, positional requirements (a fully functioning front row **MUST** be selected for both teams) and the overall numbers in the age group
 - where an age group has 36 players there will be 18 named across the two teams. If there is an odd number of players, the team in the higher division will be allocated the additional player unless coaches agree otherwise.
- non-graded age group teams (under 9 and below) may be selected taking into account friendship groups and schoolmates, but there will be an overall aim of producing teams of approximately equal strength.

Once teams are selected, there may be movement between teams on the following basis -

- coaches for each division will communicate and work together to ensure the best playing experience for all the club's players regardless of their selected team.

¹Players from 2018 can play in one age group below or two age groups above their age once they have been formerly assessed. If a coach believes a child needs to be assessed to formerly play down an age group or play up two age groups, they must write to the committee requesting an assessment be undertaken. They must clearly state justification for their request.

- players may be permanently moved between teams on agreement of coaches of both teams (keeping in mind this situation should be handled sensitively with the players involved and eligibility based on games played in each division).
- players may temporarily move between teams with agreement of both coaches (i.e. for individual games) or play in both teams' matches on a single day.
- in graded divisions, to ensure lower division players remain eligible for their 'home teams', higher division coaches cannot start players borrowed from a lower division team without the agreement of the lower division coach/es. This ensures that players remain eligible for their 'home team' in accordance with the following ACTJRU rules of competition -
 - **14 (A)** Players who have commenced in more than five matches in a higher grade, or in a higher division of a grade, are not qualified to play in a lower grade, or in a lower division of a grade, without the permission of the Judicial Committee or the Council.
 - **14 (B)** In the Under 18's division, eligibility for finals will be determined where a player has played three of this last five games or the majority of games played in this division or a lower division. Any departure for this arrangement shall require prior approvals from the Judicial Committee.
 - **15** Where, in any grade of competition a club enters more than one team in a division of that grade, a player who has commenced in more than three matches in one particular team may not thereafter play for another such team, without the permission of the Judicial Committee.

It should be noted that it is the standard practice of the club to have those U18 players in the top team known as the first fifteen. The first fifteen as a whole are expected to act as leaders and ambassadors of the club and as well as supporting the club's other teams.

Coach's responsibilities

At the beginning of each season, coaches are required to submit an expression of interest to the committee to coach a team. Their nomination must include evidence of their -

- ['Smart Rugby'](#) qualification and any other qualifications held e.g. Level 1 or 2, including the number and expiry date
- [Working with Vulnerable People Check](#) (WWVP), number and expiry date (which must be carried at all times while on club duties)

If there is a volunteer keen to become a coach and doesn't have their qualifications, the committee will assist them to complete the requirements that are mandatory according to club policy and ACTJRU and Rugby Australia rules. These requirements are -

- WWVP – all coaches
- Smart Rugby – u8 and up
- Level 1 coaching – u12 and up

The committee will allocate coaches per age group and inform the successful candidate by the end of January of the playing year. Names will be recorded on the club's website for all potential players to view prior to registrations opening. Once selected, coaches are required to enter their details into Rugby Link as a volunteer. As per club rules and insurance requirements this **must be** completed prior to the first training session of the season.

If an age group does not have a coach nominate, the committee lead by the President and Secretary will work with parents to find a coach and assist them to gain the required qualifications.

COACH'S CODE

1. You have responsibility for your team and its supporters. **EXERCISE IT.**
2. Be reasonable in your demands on the young players' time, energy and enthusiasm. Remember that they have other interests and demands on their time other than Rugby.
3. Teach your players that the rules of the game are mutual agreements which no one should evade or break.
4. Ensure that all players get a game. The 'just average' players need and deserve equal time.
5. Remember that young people play for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only part of it. Never ridicule or yell at players for making mistakes or losing a game.
6. The scheduling and length of training times and games should take into consideration the maturity level of the players.
7. Develop team respect for the ability of opponents, as well as for the judgement of referees and opposing coaches.
8. Follow the advice of a doctor in determining when an injured player is ready to play again.
9. Remember that young people need a coach they can respect. Be generous with your praise when it is deserved and set a good example.
10. Make a personal commitment to keep yourself informed on sound coaching principles and the principles of growth and development of young people.
11. Encourage young people to develop basic skills and avoid over-specialisation in positional play during their formative years.
12. Create opportunities to teach sportsmanship, just as you would in teaching basic skills.
13. Ensure that efforts for both skill improvement and good sportsmanship are rewarded by praise.
14. Ensure that skill learning and free play activities have priority over highly structured training and competitions for very young people.
15. **INSIST ON FAIR PLAY**, do not tolerate foul play, fighting, sledging or foul language. Be prepared to take off an offending player.
16. Discourage excessive talk on the pitch.
17. **INSIST** on a disciplined approach by players and mean what you say.

Player selection for matches, game time policy and players code of conduct

Each team will be allocated at least one team coach and where possible teams will have two coaches.

Coaches are required to attend trainings and games. If unable to attend, the manager must be made aware and informed of what arrangements have been put in place for the training or game.

Coaches are required to ensure all players are given equal opportunity to play across the season. It is a club expectation that where possible all players will take part in every game and playing time will be shared as equally as possible across all players in the team across the full season.

Coaches cannot give players less game time for the following reasons -

- putting a win ahead of the overall team
- not being a strong player (coaches are expected to work with these players to build the necessary skills)

The coach/coaching team may also consider the following when deciding the level of game time (noting that the player and parents must be informed of the reasons the player is being given lesser game time) -

- player attitude
- player attendance at training
- player safety (injury)

If a team is winning strongly, coaches should take into account the ACTJRU rules of competition which state that the for and against points are not taken into consideration when determining finals qualifications. As such, this situation is a great opportunity to give weaker/less experienced players more of a run on field.